

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 11505

FROM US DELEGATION, DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE,
JAMES A. JOSEPH, FOR D: WARREN CHRISTOPHER.

DEPT ALSO FOR T: LUCY BENSON; S/P: TONY LAKE; IO: BILL MAYNES.

PASS AID FOR GOVERNOR GILLIGAN

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OCON, UN, SENV
SUBJECT: UN CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION: A POSITIVE US
POSITON IS DESIRABLE AND POSSIBLE--SOME IMPRESSIONS

1. THE SERIES OF UN CONFERENCES IN PAST SEVERAL YEARS--
FROM THE 1972 ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE THROUGH THE WATER
CONFERENCE, AND NOW THE DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE--ARE REALLY
EXTENSIONS OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN SPICALIZED FIELDS.
THRE ARE MORE TO COME, NOTABLY THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
CONFERENCE IN 1979 AND PROBABLY AN ENERGY CONFERENCE AFTER THAT.
WE KNOW WELL ENOUGH THE PROMISES AND IMPERFECTIONS OF THESE
CONFERENCES. WHAT IS ESSENTIAL IS THAT THE USG ANTICIPATE, AND
DEVELOP A GENERAL STRATEGY FOR, A CONTINUING SERIES OF
CONFERENCES LIKE THIS ONE.

2. THE USG PREFERS TO CONSIDER THESE CONFERENCES AS TEHCNICAL
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AND NOT POLITICAL. BUT IN THE REAL WORLD THIS IS NOT POSIBLE.
FOR OTHER COUNTRIES(AND WE MUST ADMIT IT, FOR US AS WELL) ALL
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES ARE POLITICAL OR TO A GREATER OR LESSER
DEGREE POLITICIZED. THUS, WE CAN EXPECT SOME PLLITICIZATION HERE,
WHICH WE AND OTHERS CAN ONLY CONTAIN.

3. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE HAS

SO FAR AVOIDED EXCESSIVE POLITICIZATION. MOST COUNTRIES ARE REPRESENTED BY MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF DEVELOPMENTAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, OFTEN ROUGHLY CORRESPONDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR IN US. AS EXAMPLE, USSR CHIEF OF DELEGATION HAS BEEN APPROACHING ME OFTEN, BUT HIS CONVERSATIONS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ON SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL MATTERS. WE HAVE REPORTED THAT THE PLO DELIVERED A SPEECH WHICH, WHILE ATTACKING ISRAEL FOR VARIOUS ACTIONS(COULD WE EXPECT OTHERWISE?) WAS ALSO LARGELY CONFINED TO SUBJECT OF THIS CONFERENCE AND NEVER MENTIONED US.

4. DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE COMES BETWEEN LAGOS ANTI-APARTHEID CONFERENCE AND UNGA. IT DOES NOT, AND CANNOT, EXIST IN VACUUM. ALL OTHER DELEGATIONS (JUST AS OUR OWN DELEGATION)LOOK BACK TO LAGOS AND LOOK AHEAD TO THE UNGA. AFTER LAGOS, WE HAVE REAL OPPORTUNITY HERE TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH AFRICAN AND OTHER THIRD-WORLD STATES BEFORE THE 32ND UNGA (AND THE RESUMED 31ST SESSION) GET UNDERWAY.

5. MY OWN SPEECH HERE WAS WELL RECEIVED. OTHER DELEGATIONS HAVE TOLD ME SINCE THAT THEY ARE WATCHING VERY CAREFULLY TO SEE HOW THE WORK OF OUR DELEGATION IN COMMITTEE CORRESPONDS TO POSITIVE USG PHILOSOPHY AS EXPRESSED IN MY SPEECH. I AM SATISFIED THAT OUR DELEGATION'S WORK DOES CONFORM TO THIS PHILOSOPHY, AND ASSUME THAT WASHINGTON AGENCIES WILL SUPPORT THIS POSITION.

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6. WE HAVE A NEW ADMINISTRATION IN US AND--AS ALL OTHER DELEGATIONS HERE REALIZE--A NEW APPROACH TO AFRICAN AND OTHER THIRD-WORLD PROBLEMS. THIS CONFERENCE IS REALLY FIRST GENERAL INTERNATIONAL FORUM SINCE NEW ADMINISTRATION POLICIES HAVE BEGUN TO CRYSTALIZE(UN WATER CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE TOO SOON AFTER INAUGURATION). MOST OF OUR FRIENDS(INCLUDING OUR AFRICAN AND OTHER THIRD-WORLD FRIENDS) WELCOME OUR NEW APPROACH, BUT ARE WATCHING US CAREFULLY TO SEE IF WE FOLLOW THROUGH ON OUR PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

7. THE UN DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE WILL NOW PROCEED TO A CONSIDERATION OF VARIOUS RESOLUTIONS, SOME HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL, WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED, AND THEN TO A DECISION ON THE DESERTIFICATION ACTION PLAN, INCLUDING FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN. AFTER THE US HAS PARTICIPATED FOR MORE THAN A YEAR IN THE PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THIS CONFERENCE AND IN DRAFTING THE PLAN OF ACTION, WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT AT LEAST SOME AGREEMENT ON FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS. SIMILARLY, THE SUBJECT OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WARFARE IS INSEPARABLE FROM THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THIS CONFERENCE. IN SEPARATE TELEGRAMS I AM PROPOSING POSITIONS ON THESE TWO CRUCIAL SUBJECTS WHICH I BELIEVE ARE

REASONABLE, CONSISTENT WITH OUR GENERAL GUIDANCE, AND MOST IMPORTANT,
REFLECTIVE OF THE NEW, LESS RIGID, MORE FORTHCOMING POLICIES OF
THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION.
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Drafter: n/a
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